



October 1998

To the Citizens of Washington State:

After a series of shootings in schools across the country, parents, educators, community leaders, and youth in our own state are looking for answers to the continuing problems of youth violence and school safety. We are exploring every promising way to prevent similar tragedies in the future. As citizens, we must do everything in our power to make sure schools and communities are safe places for our kids to live, learn, and grow.

In June of this year, we called on community organizations to bring people together in public forums across the state to discuss the pillars on which youth safety must be built. We appointed an advisory group of concerned and knowledgeable citizens from across the state to attend those forums and shape statewide recommendations. We then convened a Youth Safety Summit on August 19, to consider the best ideas from the community forums and the advisory group, and to make recommendations to prevent youth violence and make our schools and communities as safe as possible.

This is the report of the Youth Safety Summit, including its recommendations to schools, communities, families, government, and the media. The report also includes background information about youth safety, recent history, the process leading to the Summit, and examples of how communities and schools in Washington are working to protect our children.

The Summit recommendations include many useful proposals that can be implemented by concerned families, schools, and communities, but they don't include all the answers. Youth safety is not created by legislation or government policy. It begins at home, at school, and in the neighborhoods and communities where our children live and learn.

We are very grateful to the thousands of Washington citizens who attended community forums across the state, to the local organizations that put them together, to the members of our citizen advisory group, to the sponsors from the private sector who helped pay for the Summit, and to all those who expressed their views. We hope this report reflects their energy and commitment, and receives the consideration their efforts deserve.

Sincerely,

Gary Locke
Governor

Dr. Terry Bergeson
Superintendent of Public Instruction